

## Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 OTTAWA 01566 291827Z

51

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R 282211Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6280

INFO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

USMISSION OECD PARIS

USINFO WASHDC

USNMR SHAPE BRUSSELS

UNCLAS OTTAWA 1566

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EO 11652 NA

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SUBJ CANADIAN REACTIONS TO EVENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

REF OTTAWA 1309; OTTAWA 1318; AND OTTAWA 1541

SUMMARY: CANADIAN PRESS HAS BEEN RELATIVELY QUIET EDITORIALY RE EVENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM ALTHOUGH SOME COMMENT HAS APPEARED URGING A STOP TO THE FIGHTING AND STATING THAT THIEU'S DEPARTURE REPRESENTS "GIVING IN TO THE INEVITABLE." MEANWHILE, CONSERVATIVE OPPOSITION IN PARLIAMENT HAS CRITICIZED GOC HEAVILY FOR NOT MAKING GREATER EFFORT TO HELP REFUGEES. END SUMMARY.

1. WHILE NEWS REPORTS HAVE BEEN COPIOUS ON GENERAL SUBJECT OF THE DISINTEGRATION OF SOUTH VIETNAM, ON FLIGHT OF REFUGEES, AND ON FALL OF THIEU REGIME, CANADIAN EDITORIAL PAGES HAVE NOT DEVOTED TOO MUCH ATTENTION TO OVERALL PROBLEM. THE UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 OTTAWA 01566 291827Z

OTTAWA CITIZEN, THE TORONTO GLOBE & MAIL, AND THE MONTREAL

STAR, FOR EXAMPLE, ALL FOCUSSED ON "THE INEVITABLE FALL OF MR. THIEU." GLOBE & MAIL CALLED THE EVENT "...THE PASSING... OF A SECOND INDOCHINA DESPOT MADE IMPOTENT BY THE WITHDRAWAL OF WASHINGTON SUPPORT... MR. THIEU'S GOVERNMENT WAS A GOVERNMENT OF CORRUPTION AND REPRESSION... BECAUSE IN SOUTH VIETNAM AFTER THE YEARS OF WAR, THE DEAD, THE ORPHANED, THE STARVING, THE SMASHED LAND, THERE IS NOTHING THAT IS A MATTER FOR REJOICING. THERE NOW CAN BE ONLY THE FAINT HOPE THAT ...A RAPID POLITICAL END TO THE FIGHTING CAN BE ACHIEVED."

2. OTTAWA CITIZEN AND MONTREAL STAR ECHOED THIS LINE WITH THE CITIZEN SAYING THAT END RESULT WILL BE THE SAME, I.E. A REUNIFIED VIETNAM UNDER COMMUNIST RULE, BUT THAT NEGOTIATED END TO WAR WILL MAKE THE PROCESS LESS COSTLY IN HUMAN TERMS. MONTREAL STAR TRIES TO AVOID BLAMING ANYONE FOR DEBACLE AND PRAISES WASHINGTON FOR NO LONGER HAVING "ANY INTENTION OF ATTEMPTING TO SHORE UP THE RAPIDLY DISINTEGRATING THIEU REGIME" BUT RATHER FOCUSING ON EVACUATION OF AMERICAN AND SOUTH VIETNAMESE PERSONNEL.

3. OTTAWA JOURNAL IN TWO EDITORIALS COMMENTED THAT "AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA HAS BEEN A DISMAL FAILURE...BUT ACKNOWLEDGING THIS DOES NOT DIMINISH IN ANY WAY THE FAR GREATER CULPABILITY OF THE COMMUNIST FORCES...THE BLINKERED LIBERALISM WHICH IN CANADA MAKES IT FASHIONABLE THESE DAYS TO CRITICIZE ALMOST EVERYTHING MADE IN THE UNITED STATES SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO OBSCURE THE FACT THAT THE UNSWERVING RUTHLESS DEDICATION OF COMMUNISTS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA--AND IN MOSCOW--IS THE FUNDAMENTAL REASON WHY THE WAR CONTINUED AND WHY THE COMMUNISTS WON." EDITORIAL ALSO URGES THAT ALLIES SHOULD TAKE VERY SERIOUSLY ASSURANCES GIVEN BY PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY DURING THE PAST WEEKS "THE LOSS OF WILL IN VIETNAM SURELY DOES NOT MEAN A LOSS OF WILL IN, SAY, WESTERN EUROPE...BUT THE NEW REALISM IN U.S. FOREIGN POLICY WHICH WILL UNDOUBTEDLY EMERGE MORE STRONGLY IN THE DAYS AHEAD, ALONG WITH THE NEW CONSISTENCY, MAY IN THE LONG TERM UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 OTTAWA 01566 291827Z

MAKE IT MORE EFFECTIVE. IT IS NO TIME FOR THE FRIENDS OF THE UNITED STATES TO DESPAIR." IN SECOND EDITORIAL OTTAWA JOURNAL JOINS CHORUS IN SEEKING NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT "TO STOP THE SLAUGHTER. THE WORLD WILL BE WATCHING TO SEE WHETHER THE COMMUNISTS WILL ASSIST IN THAT PURPOSE."

4. ON GENERAL SUBJECT OF CANADIAN ROLE IN SOUTH VIETNAM,

SOUTHAM NEWS SERVICE COLUMNIST CHARLES LYNCH HAS PUBLISHED COLUMN ENTITLED "PULL-OUT JUSTIFIED." HE POINTS OUT FRANKLY THAT "THERE HAS BEEN NOTHING IN CANADIAN POLICY THAT SHOULD HAVE LED TO ANY ... BELIEF" (THAT CANADA HAS BETRAYED THOSE WHO BELIEVED THERE WOULD BE A CANADIAN STAND). LYNCH ARGUES THAT ANY CRITICISM OF CANADIAN ACTION TODAY SHOULD HAVE BEEN MADE YEARS AGO DURING THE PEARSON GOVERNMENT. "IN CANADIAN TERMS, THE CAUSE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH VIETNAM WAS DEEMED A CAUSE NOT WORTH FIGHTING FOR, AND WHILE THE PEARSON AND TRUDEAU GOVERNMENTS WERE SAYING THIS, THEY WERE CEMENTING RELATIONS WITH THE COMMUNIST GOVERNMENTS MOST RESPONSIBLE FOR THE COLLAPSE OF THE SAIGON FORCES-- THE GOVERNMENTS OF NORTH VIETNAM, CHINA AND THE SOVIET UNION." LYNCH CONCLUDES BY POINTING OUT CANADA IS ACTING CONSISTENTLY AND IF IT IS NOT ACTING CONSISTENTLY, "WHY HAVEN'T WE BEEN FIGHTING IN VIETNAM ALL ALONG?"

5. MEANWHILE, IN PARLIAMENT OPPOSITION CONSERVATIVE PARTY MP'S "ARE USING THE FATE OF THE WAR REFUGEES AS THEIR LATEST STICK TO BEAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT" ACCORDING TO ONE PRESS ACCOUNT. THE GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN ACCUSED "OF EVERYTHING FROM A DOUBLE STANDARD OF IMMIGRATION TO CHICKEN-LIVERED DIPLOMACY." SONE CONSERVATIVE (HEATH MACQUARRIE) EVEN SUGGESTED THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SHOULD DEFY THE LAWS OF SOUTH VIETNAM TO REMOVE THOSE WHO WANT TO EMIGRATE TO CANADA. HE ACCUSED THE GOVERNMENT OF DESERTING MANY SOUTH VIETNAMESE WHO HAD WORKED FOR THE CANADIAN EMBASSY. IN REPLY, ACTING PRIME MINISTER MITCHELL SHARP AND IMMIGRATION MINISTER ROBERT ANDRAS HAVE POINTED OUT THAT "THE PROBLEM WAS THAT THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT GRANT AUTHORITY FOR THOSE PEOPLE TO LEAVE SOUTH VIETNAM." UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 OTTAWA 01566 291827Z

THERE WAS ROOM FOR MORE PEOPLE ON THE CANADIAN EVACUATION PLANE (WHICH ALLEGEDLY TOOK PIANOS, CARS AND OTHER SOUVENIRS INSTEAD OF REFUGEES) BUT AGAIN GOC CLAIMED THAT PERSONNEL WERE STOPPED AT SOUTH VIETNAM CHECK POINTS ON THE WAY TO THE AIRPORT.

6. COMMENT: CANADIAN POSITION SHOULD NOT BE SURPRISING AND LYNCH ARTICLE CITED ABOVE PROBABLY CLOSE TO MARK. CANADIANS DO NOT FEEL THE WAR HAS BEEN "THEIRS" IN ANY WAY, AND DO NOT FEEL ANY GREAT NEED TO INVOLVE SELVES EXCESSIVELY IN PROBLEM OTHER THAN FOR BASIC HUMAN CONCERNS. JOHNSON

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